

FOODBORNE TOXINS

As a pregnant woman, you should be especially careful of the way you handle and consume foods. You are at particular risk for foodborne illness because your immune system is weakened by pregnancy. This is a natural condition, which helps you and your baby to get along with each other. However, this weakness also makes it harder for your body to fight off harmful foodborne microorganisms.

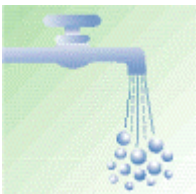
Foodborne toxins include:

- Toxoplasma gondii – a parasite found in undercooked meat; unwashed fruits and vegetables; water; dust; soil; dirty cat-litter boxes; and outdoor places cat feces may be found
- Listeria monocytogenes – a bacteria found in refrigerated, ready to eat foods (meat, poultry, seafood, and dairy – unpasteurized milk and milk products or foods made with unpasteurized milk), and soil
- Other toxins such as salmonella, e. coli, and harmful bacteria or parasites – found in undercooked foods, or foods stored in unsanitary conditions.

What can be done to prevent foodborne toxins?

- Preventing foodborne toxins is really quite easy. In fact, you and your family should continue good food safety practices even after the baby is born!

Start with these 4 Simple Steps:



Step 1 **CLEAN**

Wash hands and fruits and vegetables before eating. Sanitize surfaces and your refrigerator.



Step 2 **SEPARATE**

Separate your foods when preparing, being careful not to cross contaminate meats, dairy, and fruits/vegetables or raw and uncooked foods. Use separate cutting boards and utensils.



Step 3 **COOK**

Cook foods to proper internal temperatures. Don't leave food out at room temperature for lengths of time. Heat hotdogs, lunchmeats, and leftovers.



Step 4 **CHILL**

Refrigerate foods promptly. Don't defrost foods at room temperature.